

EVE's UnEVEN Relationship with Adam: Milton's *Paradise Lost* in the Light of Politeness Theory

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ABSTRACT

Feminists, among others, have found Eve's representation in Milton's *Paradise Lost* problematic over the last centuries. Some of them consider Eve to be Adam's inferior while others find traces of egalitarian relationship between them. This study uses Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson's Politeness Theory and applies it to the conversations between Adam and Eve prior to the Fall in order to address this issue. It is demonstrated in this article that, before the Fall, Eve always exercises less power than Adam except for a brief moment that she achieves equality.

Keywords: Milton; *Paradise Lost*; Politeness Theory; Power; Eve

1. INTRODUCTION

At the time of the composition of *Paradise Lost*, Milton could not have the slightest idea about the thorough investigation that his magnum opus would foment in the years following its publication. In *The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost*, Webber writes, "almost everyone is either for or against *Paradise Lost*; many see their own causes reflected or distorted in it" (1980:4). Feminists, among others, have found Eve's representation in Milton's *Paradise Lost* problematic over the last centuries. This problem is reflected in the title of a dissertation by Laura Beth Flaspohler (2012): *A Superior Inferior: Eve as John Milton's Tragic Hero in Paradise Lost*. As 'superior inferior' in the title shows, Eve's position and her relation to Adam is debatable: Is Eve inferior or superior to Adam? Or are they equal?

Generally, critics of Eve's place in *Paradise Lost* are divided into two groups. The first group believes that Milton offers a very negative view of Eve, in particular, and women, in general. Samuel Johnson, for instance, maintains that the female characters that appear in Milton's writing are "subordinate and inferior beings" and this characterization is in keeping with Milton's life where women were the preponderant group and where he gave her daughters a poor education and prevented them from stepping out of their social rank and status (2009:5). Sandra M. Gilbert characterizes Milton as "the first of the masculinists" who recounts "the story of woman's secondness, her otherness" (1978:370). The problem of the negative representation of Eve and her "secondness" partly owes to the fact that Milton deployed misogyny through an "established misogynistic tradition" (Fish, 1998:249) which he had inherited from popular works like *The Faerie Queene* with which he was familiar.

Another important influence on Milton's writing is the Bible. Milton as a passionate devotee believed that "the Bible is a record of divinely inspired truth which it is the Christian's duty to interpret and follow, not to contradict or ignore" (Ferry, 1988:113). Therefore, his depiction of Adam and Eve in paradise is constrained in one way or another by the Bible's account of the Fall. It is important to note that although Milton had Bible in mind, he does not conform rigidly to it and transforms the story of the fall to a more interesting narrative compared to that of the Bible.

While some critics focus on Eve as a submissive and inferior character, others including Diane Kelsey McColly, William Shullenberger, and John Shawcross regard her as a woman of great independence and freedom who lives a life with Adam which involves mutual love, appreciation and equal status. According to Shawcross Eve is "superior to Adam in showing the way to redemption and salvation and indeed the hinge upon which redemption and salvation will be effected by the Godhead" (2005:40)

The confusion over status of Eve and her relation with Adam is caused and reinforced in the first place by the text of *Paradise Lost* itself and the multiplicity of perspectives within it. We find the opportunity to see what the narrator, Satan, God, Adam and Eve say about Eve's position in Paradise; different views that are not easy to reconcile. For example, in book VIII, Adam who is suffering from pangs of loneliness especially when he sees that each member of any animal species has a mate to converse with, demands god a partner who is "fit to participate / All rational delight, wherein the brute,/ Cannot be human consort" (Milton 390-391). This partner, who is evidently Eve, is not short of thinking abilities and is not Adam's obdident servant but his "consort." When God decides to satisfy Adam's need, he says to Adam that

What next I bring, shall please thee, be assured
thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self
thy wish to exactly to thy heart's desires. (ibid. 449-451)

Here, Eve seems to have been created for Adam's sake: she is created in Adam's image, she is supposed to be his partner and his solace. However, simultaneously Eve has been created for her own sake. God doesn't mention the superiority or inferiority among men and women when he tells his angels that:

In a moment [I] will create
Another world, out of one man a Race
Of men innumerable, there [on Earth] to dwell,
Not here [in heaven], till by degrees of merit raise'd
They open to themselves at length the way
up hither. (ibid. 154-159)

In the fourth book, Satan, having arrived in Eden, sees "undelighted all delight, and all kind / of living Creatures new to sight and strange" (ibid. 286-87). Among these are Adam and Eve, our first parents, who are described as "two of far nobler shapes, erect and tall/Godlike erect" (ibid. 288-289). They seemed to be "lords of all" and in them "the image of their glorious Maker shone" (ibid. 292). The hierarchical relationship between Adam and Eve and their relation with God on the ladder of species is presented to us as though both

*Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;
 For contemplation he and valor formed,
 For softness she and sweet attractive grace,
 He for God only, she for God in him* (ibid. 3. 290-299, my emphasis)

Here, it is directly stated that Eve is not on a par with Adam (“Not equal”) due to the inherent inequality in “their sex.” The phrase “not equal, as their sex not equal seemed” is an ambiguous one. The problem is that Milton doesn’t point out which one is higher: Is Eve higher than Adam or vice versa?

Milton is ambiguous and much has been written about ambiguity of his style of writing. He allows readers to know about his viewpoint in the same way they are allowed to hear what God, Satan, Adam and Eve think, say and do. It seems that Milton decided to present various viewpoints on the same subject [in this case the relationship between Adam and Eve] without privileging one over the rest. The ambiguity and polyphony of his style is not a barrier to the analysis of Adam-Eve relation. Rather we can use the dialogic nature of *Paradise Lost* to see *how* each character acts and as a result determine his / her inferiority or superiority. In order to show whether Eve is Adam’s Inferior or not, some of the selected dialogues, which happen before the Fall, between them are scrutinized in the light of Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory.

2. POLITENESS THEORY

There are different approaches to politeness and each of them treats it from a different angle. These perspectives encompass traditional (i.e. Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983) and post-modern views (i.e. Eelen, 2011; Watts, 2003). This study narrows down its focus to the politeness model proposed by Brown and Levinson which yields itself readily to the analysis of literary texts. For Brown and Levinson, politeness is a precondition of human interaction and fundamental to the generation of social order and any explanation of this phenomenon goes hand in hand with the people’s social life (Gumperz, xiii). Central to Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory is the concept of *face* which they take from theories of Erving Goffman. Face is the public self-image that each person claims for himself (Goffman, 1967:5). Brown and Levinson expanded on this concept by assuming rational interlocutors who have two faces that do not always work in tandem: *positive face* and *negative face*. Positive face is defined as the desire to be appreciated and approved while negative face designates the desire not to be imposed upon or act freely from any impediments.

Face can be lost, maintained or improved and in any social interaction participants’ needs may interfere, as a result, they commit Face-Threatening Acts (FTA). FTAs are interactional events that either debunk our sense of self-esteem or encroach on our autonomy and involve speech acts such as requests, invitations, criticisms, etc. Since FTAs form an inevitable part of daily interactions, speakers can use politeness to maintain the hearer’s face or lessen the force of the threat. Brown and Levinson postulated a hierarchy of five super-strategies, from the least polite to most polite, that can be used in order to minimize FTAs: (1)

bald-on record (2) *positive politeness* (3) *negative politeness* (4) *off-record* and (5) *don't do the FTA*¹.

Bald-on record which is realized in forms of direct address (e.g. Open the door!) runs the risk of looking blunt and disrespectful of hearer's 'wants' and desires. Nevertheless, it's inevitable in cases of emergencies (e.g. a surgeon may tell a nurse "Give me that pair of forceps."). Positive politeness takes into account hearer's positive face. It is "approach-based" since speaker gives the hearer the assurance that he/she recognizes, respects and wants hearer's wants and it accentuate the similarities between the parties (e.g. Goodness, you cut your hair! (...) By the way, I came to borrow some flour.) Negative politeness is "avoidance based" in the sense that speaker does not want to put curb on hearer's independence and liberty (e.g. I hope you'll forgive me if...). Using this super-strategy has the following benefits: speaker pays tribute to hearer in return for the committed FTA; he can maintain social distance and also he can give a real 'out' to the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1987:72). The fourth super-strategy is used when speaker wants to avoid coercing hearer into doing something. By tacitly making his/her request (e.g. It's very hot in here! [expecting the hearer to open the door]), speaker gives the hearer an opportunity to pretend not to have understood the request. And finally speaker may choose not to do any FTAs (the fifth super-strategy).

Choice of appropriate super-strategy is dependent on the seriousness of an FTA. Seriousness of an FTA is measured using the following formula. D stands for the social distance between speaker and hearer and P represents the relative power of speaker over hearer and R refers to ranking of imposition; that is, some impositions are greater and more serious than others. These three factors are context and culture-dependent.

$$W_x = D(S,H) + P(S,H) + R_x$$

As weightiness of an FTA increases, more politeness strategies are employed. Thus, according to the formula, if hearer is one of speaker's acquaintances, speaker is likely to use super-strategy (1) while strangers are prone to use super-strategy (4). In case of power, if the speaker is more powerful than the hearer e.g. a king addressing a courtier, speaker goes on-record while hearer goes off-record. The same logic applies to the ranking of imposition. As R increases, more politeness strategies are required e.g. when somebody wants to accuse another person of robbery; he/she uses more politeness strategies than when he/she wants to accuse that person of eavesdropping.

¹ Each of these super-strategies consists of some sub-strategies that are listed here:


Positive politeness: Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods); Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H); Intensify interest to H; Use in-group identity markers; Seek agreement; Avoid disagreement; Presuppose/raise/assert common ground; Joke; Offer, promise; Be optimistic; Include both S and H in the activity; Give or (ask for) reason; Assume or assert reciprocity; Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

Negative politeness: Be conventionally indirect; Question, hedge; Be pessimistic; Minimize the imposition; Give deference; Apologize; Impersonalize S and H; State the FTA as a general rule; Nominalize; Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebted to H

Off-record: Give hints; Give association clues; Presuppose; Understate; Overstate; Use tautologies; Use contradictions; Be ironic; Use metaphors; Use rhetorical questions; Be ambiguous; Be vague; Over-generalize; Displace H; Be incomplete, use ellipsis

3. APPLICATION

In what follows, because Adam and Eve are throughout *Paradise Lost* spouses, it is assumed that the first factor (Distance) is stable since they are not strangers; therefore, unless Ranking of the imposition is low, the changes in the politeness strategies deployed by Adam and Eve are commensurate with changes of the power relations between them. This can be graphically shown as:

If R is ↓, since D is →, changes in politeness strategies =  in P

Where book IV of *Paradise Lost* begins, Satan is ambushed in Heaven while he feels the presence of “high advanced Creatures of other mold, earth born” (Milton, 359-60). They are our first parents: “Adam the goodliest man of men since borne / His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve” (ibid. 323-24). They were naked and passed “hand in hand,” a phrase that has been used as a symbolic equality of Adam and Eve in order to acquit Milton of misogyny (Ziegelmann, 2003:17). As Satan puts it, a “woodie Theatre” is set and Adam initiates his conversation with Eve. Adam’s first words, in the vocative mode, exalt Eve: “Sole partner and sole part of these joys, Dearer thyself than all” (Milton, 4.411-12). Here, he uses positive politeness by complimenting Eve and trying to show that he cares about Eve’s desire for approval and appreciation. The use of “sole” adds to the unitary sense of their relationship, implying both Adam’s high regard of his wife and her uniqueness. Also “sole” is a pun, in speech, on ‘soul’ implying that Eve is Adam’s essence and spirit which complements him and makes him a unified whole. The word “part” is part of “partner” just as Eve is part of Adam, both in the sense that they are spiritually connected and in the sense that she derives from a physical part of him, his rib. She is wholly his partner, but part of the greater whole that is the couple. Although, in this line, he uses politeness strategies like exaggeration (“Dearer thyself than all”), the words are chosen in a way that betrays and undermines his exaltation without acknowledging it; on one hand his compliment empowers Eve as an equal companion, on the other hand it defines her as Adam’s sole possession.

Then, Adam gives a lecture about God’s bountiful creation and his goodness to Adam and Eve. The first thing that Adam does is to give the reasons why God is a benevolent creator to use it as a positive politeness strategy: first and foremost, God has “made us [Adam and Eve]” and raised them “from the dust” and also he has placed them “here [in Heaven] / in all this happiness,” a place which is an ample world. Adam says that despite God’s goodness and despite the fact that he does not need anybody to do anything for him, and even if he had, nobody could “perform / Aught whereof he hath need” (418-19), God “requires / From *us* *no* other service than to keep / This *one*, this *easy* charge, of *all* the trees / In Paradise that bear delicious fruit / So various, not to taste that *only* Tree / Of knowledge” (ibid. 419.24, my emphasis). Here, Adam uses several conspicuous politeness strategies: (1) use of inclusive form: Adam includes both Eve and himself in God’s interdiction using the inclusive pronoun “us” and consequently calls upon “the cooperative assumption” whereby the FTA is redressed. (Brown and Levinson, 1987:127) (2) stating the FTA as a general rule: this technique is used when S does not want to impinge on H by making the assertion that the FTA is an instance of some general regulation or obligation. Adam clarifies that it’s not him but God that has ordered to shun the Tree of knowledge. (3) minimizing the imposition: Adam says to Eve that it is no big deal (“this *easy* charge”) to refrain from the Tree of knowledge among “all the trees”; Adam uses the word “all” which is believed to be a characteristically Adamic word in order to demolish the “obvious facts of differentiation”

(Hausknecht,176), that is, to minimize the significance of the Tree of knowledge among other trees. He begins his sentence with “this *one*” tree and ends it with the “*only* Tree.” These two words are synonymous and their repetition is redundant unless we consider the emphasis that Adam wants to put is on the insignificance of the task that he and Eve are supposed to fulfill collaboratively.

I don’t analyze the rest of politeness strategies that Adam uses in this part but the manner of his inaugural speech and what happens in Eden has led some critics to argue for equality of Adam and Eve. Roberta Martin thinks of Adam’s phrases like “Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,/ Dearer thy self than all” as an “over-evaluation” of Eve (2000: 66) and also a “subtle hint of his weakness for his wife” (Mustazza , 1988:74). Adam’s speech and his frequent use of politeness strategies and his indirect way of saying things made Schoenfeldt claim that “The speech of Adam and Eve, like their work in the garden, is surprisingly egalitarian” (1993:324).

Using Politeness Theory and considering the three factors that Brown and Levinson introduced, it can be assuredly said that Adam’s lenient speech does not mark Adam and Eve’s equality in their relation. Despite the use of “one easy prohibition” to minimize the imposition on Eve’s negative face in order to discourage her from approaching the lethal tree, Adam is aware of the hazard that tasting that tree poses to them. Their avoidance of the tree is, first of all, “The only sign of” their “obedience left,” and secondly it prevents a disaster, that is, “death” which is “some dreadful thing no doubt (Milton, 4.426). If they don’t succeed at paying tribute to God because of their disobedience, in addition to outraging God, they have to face the horrible consequence awaiting them, “death”. This is one side of the coin, the other side is that “Eve ... sees food as the way to power” and for her “that power-both social and political-is inextricably related to spiritual transformation.” (Tigner, 2010:246) Eve is a “consummate chef” and has “a clear intellectual mastery of culinary possibilities of her garden that is distinctively outside patriarchal purview.” (ibid. 240) Therefore, Adam’s employment of many politeness strategies and his attempt to maintain Eve’s positive and negative faces is done strategically and purposefully. It is proportionate to Ranking of the imposition of the FTA and does not indicate that Eve and Adam enjoy equal powers. Eve is the one who knows more about the garden of Eden, as a result, commenting on issues related to it and forbidding the fruit of one of its trees is a serious imposition on Eve’s negative face that is quite meticulously handled by Adam.

In book V, Eve awakens from a dream in which somebody (evidently Satan) tries to convince her to taste the Tree of Knowledge to become “a goddess, not to earth confined” (Milton,78) among the gods. She speaks to Adam about the dream. God who has been observing Satan’s actions, orders Raphael to visit Adam and warn him about Satan’s machinations. Raphael moves immediately toward Adam’s dwelling. Adam is sitting at the door of his bower while Eve is preparing dinner. Adam notices Raphael’s arrival and says,

*Haste hither, Eve, and worth thy sight behold
Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape
Comes this way moving, seems another morn
Ris’n on mid- noon! Some great behest from Heav’n
To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
And what thy stores contain bring forth, and pour
Abundance, fit to honor and receive
Our Heavenly stranger. (ibid. 308-316, my emphasis)*

What is significant in this part of Adam's speech is his being bald-on record and doing serious FTAs. He orders Eve to go near him, to watch Raphael in the sky, to go as quickly as possible and to bring Raphael food. Adam benefits just from one politeness strategy and it's the use of inclusive forms such as "us" and "our." These serious FTAs are done by Adam while in his previous utterance he used appellations like "Sole partner and sole part of these joys, Dearer thyself than all" to address Eve. Knowing that R factor is low in this part, and D is constant, Adam's use of blunt orders indicates his higher power and superiority. The reason why Adam starts commanding Eve to prepare a meal without trying to maintain Eve's face is that Raphael is a "sociable Spirit" (5.221) who can displace Eve and fulfill her role as a companion fit for conversation.

But is there much power difference between Eve and him at this point? The answer is negative. Eve's response to Adam's order is as follows,

Adam, earth's hallowed mold,
Of God inspired, small store will serve, where store
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk,
Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes
But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
To entertain our Angel-guest (ibid. 321- 328)

In response to Adam's speeches in paradise (including the first one analyzed here), Eve showed her deference using abundant honorifics and phrases that clearly stated her subordination. She called Adam "my guide And head" (ibid. 4.442-3) and "my Glory, my Perfection" (ibid. 5.28-9). She didn't try to challenge Adam's ideas and wishes either. But here, we can see a big change in her discourse. No longer do we hear a chain of polite honorifics. Adam is simply called "Adam" and the only deference to him is "earth's hallowed mold, Of God inspired," a deferential phrase that has subversive intentions behind it. Like the fruits of a tree ("store [that] hangs on the stalk," 322-23), Eve says, Adam is a product of the "earth's hallowed mold." Eve uses positive politeness and simultaneously reminds Adam of his down-to-earth origin. She, like Adam, uses the inclusive form "our" when she refers to Raphael and tells Adam, using negative politeness by minimizing the imposition which is realized in her use of "small," that even "*small* store will serve" but she does not (probably dare) turn him down and as a result has to follow his order and leave Raphael and Adam alone.

As I showed, at this juncture, both Adam and Eve use less politeness strategies, but we cannot say, as Liebert maintains, that Eve drops formulae of 'reciprocal courtesies' altogether (Liebert, 2003:159). It is Eve who uses relatively more politeness strategies compared to Adam; therefore, it can be said that, now, there's a marginal power difference between Adam and Eve; Adam has the upper hand yet. But it is important to note that Eve is trying to "nudge their relationship towards a horizontal interrelation of equals" (ibid, 158)

After Raphael leaves them, Adam and Eve are engaged in a quarrel whether to tend the garden separately or collaboratively. Their dialogue can help us determine their power relation just before the Fall. This conversation is different from previous give-and-takes in *Paradise Lost* since as narrator says "Eve first to her husband thus began" (Milton, 9.204). The aim of narrator's use of "first" in this sentence is twofold: not only is she the one who begins the argument (Eve speaks first), but also it is the first time that it has occurred (for the first time she began). (Liebert, 2003:159)

Eve, like his previous speech, makes use of the unadorned name “Adam” in order to draw his attention. The use of Adam’s name is a positive politeness strategy that is employed to highlight in-group membership with the H (Brown and Levinson, 1987:107-08). However, she no longer uses honorifics like “my author.” She continues by commenting on their job in Eden. She tells Adam that “what we by day / Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind, / One night or two with wanton growth derides, / Tending to wild” (Milton, 9.209-212). Here she uses plural inclusive pronoun “we” which runs throughout the rest of her speech as a politeness strategy. Then, when she feels really confident, she gives an order to Adam:

Thou therefore now advise

Or hear to my mind first thoughts present,
 Let us divide our labors, thou where choice
 Leads thee, or where most needs....
 [...] ..., while I
 In yonder springs of roses intermixed
 With myrtle, find to redress till noon:
 [...] what wonder if so near
 Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
 Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
 Our day’s work brought to little. (ibid. 9.212-224)

Depending on the words that “first” qualifies, we can elicit two incongruent interpretations from “my mind first thoughts present.” If we consider “first” as an adjective that qualifies “thoughts,” Eve’s statement highlights her humility (it was the first idea that came to my mind); otherwise, if we read “first” emphatically it means that this idea (i.e. working separately) was a good thought that I could think of while Adam couldn’t (Liebert, 2003:160). The second interpretation is more appropriate to Eve’s speech in this part since she seems over-enjoyed to an unprecedented degree that commits a serious FTA without employing any redressive strategies. She orders Adam that he must either “advise” or “Hear” her thought. While she introduces two alternatives to Adam, she rushes quickly into expressing her own opinion before Adam has a chance to respond. After doing a serious FTA, she reverts to her previous manner of speech and uses more politeness strategies. The first one that she uses is done by asserting a reciprocal exchange. Eve tells Adam that you should work “where choice / Leads thee, or where most needs” and I work, in return, “In yonder springs of roses.” By mentioning the reciprocal right or habit of doing FTAs, S (here, Eve) “may soften his FTA by negating the debt aspect and/or the fact-threatening aspect of speech acts.” (Brown and Levinson, 1987:129)

The last politeness strategy that Eve uses at this point is called hedges. Hedges function both as a positive and negative politeness strategies and they are a fundamental method of “disarming routine interactional threats.” (ibid. 146) Eve’s use of “what wonder if” is used to hedge or reduce the illocutionary force of her utterance. Instead of telling Adam that, for instance “Don’t be surprised that...,” she uses this adverbial-clause hedge. Eve knows that her request is a serious imposition on Adam’s freedom, because as we know, it is the first time that Eve initiates a conversation and therefore it seems unlikely that she will initiate a “Casual discourse” with Adam in the course of day and consequently endanger their daily work. Adam is the one who may defile all their attempts and bring their day’s work “to little” by talking about unnecessary issues.

In contrast to the abrupt brevity of Eve's speech, Adam develops his responses slowly and thoroughly, taking time to preface his refutations with a complimentary address and couching his remarks with deliberate care to avoid offending Eve. He begins his response with a courteous tribute: "Sole Eve, associate sole, to my beyond / Compare above all living creatures dear" (Milton, 9.227-28). "Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts employed" (ibid. 9.229), which is Adam's next sentence, exemplifies a positive strategy of "expressing approval." (Brown and Levinson, 1987:104)

Though disagreeing with the reasons she has given for their separation, Adam praises what he assumes is her motive for wishing greater efficiency in their daily labor: "For nothing lovelier can be found / In Woman, than to study household good, / And good works in her Husband to promote" (Milton, 232-4). Adam maintains that "irksome toil" shouldn't "debar us when we need / Refreshment" (ibid. 9.235-36), an FTA which is expressed using inclusive form. Then, he warns Eve about the presence of a malicious enemy that envies "our [Adam and Eve's] happiness." Having given the reasons why Adam is leery of permitting Eve work alone, Adam issues an order that is stripped of any politeness strategies: "leave not the faithful side / That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects" (ibid. 9.265-66).

If we reconsider the politeness strategies that Adam and Eve employed during this part of the conversation we realize that both Adam and Eve frequently and almost equally made use of politeness strategies. Throughout their conversation, except for once, they maintained each other's faces and under the rest of circumstances they avoided using blunt and direct orders. Therefore, it can be said that they exercise equal powers just before the Fall.

4. CONCLUSION

Unlike traditional modes of thinking which tend to encode Adam and Eve's relation into binary oppositions like superior/inferior, ruler/obedient or powerful/powerless, this study proposed and showed that power struggle between these two characters is so complex and cannot be formulated into simple-minded binary oppositions. To say that someone is superior/inferior to another, reduces the power struggle between interactants to essentialist claims while power in Foucault's opinion is not possessed; it is exercised (26). Adam and Eve, consequently, are not endowed with unchallenged status and power, rather, they have to struggle to exercise power; a struggle which is realized in their conversation in the form of speech acts. Using Politeness Theory, it was shown that, at some points, Adam was the one who had more power than Eve, while at one point, Eve could prove herself as Adam's equal. Eve never becomes Adam's superior, though. This study focused on the relationship between Adam and Eve before the Fall, thus, future studies can analyze their conversation after the Fall in the light of Politeness Theory.

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